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Vermont Futures Project
Handout - Recovery Programming Planning Meeting
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**Values and Principles for Recovery Oriented Services – Secure
Recovery Residence**

Philosophy and Values

The Vermont Department of Mental Health and Vermont State Hospital embrace the philosophy of recovery. Specific programming in this service will be designed to promote recovery in a patient group that is often remaindered to long term institutional care. The services in this residential setting will be guided by the belief that, with support and the opportunities to learn and connect with people, every person can create his or her own recovery from mental illness, reclaim hope, build skills, and create a meaningful life. The program will be grounded in the premise that recovery can occur even in the presence of symptoms of severe mental illness.

Consistent with a recovery philosophy, services will be designed to promote and support wellness and meaningful life experiences, and to promote and encourage the learning of skills necessary to live a satisfying life. These services will not focus solely on symptom reduction or management. The program will be designed to integrate Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services. The design will also recognize the prevalence and impact of trauma on people served in mental health treatment systems. Services will be provided within a structure which will allow development of therapeutic and collaborative relationships between staff and the residents who receive them.

The creation of a safe environment is central to the provision of services in this setting. Consistent with a recovery philosophy, prevention of aggression and maintenance of safety will be integral to the treatment environment and will be incorporated at each point of care. Consistent with the philosophy of Positive Behavior Supports, individuals will be engaged in learning processes that help them make effective choices, reduce the amount of harm in their lives and increase their personal strengths. An initial formulation of the philosophy of the program might be:

We collaborate with the individuals we serve to help them establish satisfying lives beyond illness by providing services that are person-first, person-centered, culturally competent and evidence-based.

The following values are essential to this endeavor:

- Respect for the dignity and rights of all people working together in the recovery environment
- Mutual respect
- Integration and cohesiveness of treatment – within facility and larger community

- Community connectedness
- Meeting people where they are in treatment
- Accessibility of information and services
- Effective treatment with measurable and observable outcomes
- Flexibility in service provision
- Individualized treatment
- Collaborative community-based services
- Culturally competent services
- Least restrictive, most effective interventions
- Change, growth and learning for providers, system, and individuals served are integral expectations of the program
- Honor and respect individuals' experiences of survival, resilience, and growth
- Personal choice and responsibility

As the program development process unfolds it is expected that stakeholders will discuss and refine their understanding of the shared values that inform the program.

Program Principles and Assumptions

The following statements will inform the development of the program implementation plan. They are based on evidence of best practices and the values of recovery.

Program Principles

- The individuals' perspective should be central to all decisions related to his/her treatment and recovery.
- Recovery is a learning process.
- Use of involuntary strategies such as seclusion, restraint, and involuntary medication are indicators of treatment failure. If such are used to support safety, then the program recognizes that the use of involuntary emergency procedures is traumatic to the individual and the residential community. As such, any use of seclusion and restraint will require reparative work.
- Services will be based on current literature and informed by research and evidence of effective practice.
- Support and structure provided by clinicians will be tailored to meet the need of each individual, based upon the degree of his/her current psychiatric/mental health status and level of independence.
- Individuals receiving services will play an integral role in documentation processes recording their recovery process and treatment successes and challenges.
- Services and interventions will be consistently evaluated for effectiveness for the individual and will be re-oriented and changed based on this ongoing evaluation.
- Program development and oversight will be conducted with ongoing consumer and community input.

- Neutral, objective and supportive language is imperative in an environment of hope and recovery.

Assumptions underlying these statements include:

- Recovery can occur even in the presence of symptoms of mental illness.
- Every person can engage in the recovery process by reclaiming hope, building skills, and creating a meaningful life based on his or her own personal goals.
- Relapse is a normal occurrence in the process of recovery.
- Safety is possible and expected for all participants.

Connecting Individuals to Community Supports

Many of the individuals who will live in the SRR have lost their connections to family and community. A key element of recovery is to assist individuals achieve viable connections with the world beyond the SRR. Accordingly, building community connections to facilitate discharge planning will commence with admission and become an integral part of treatment planning. Program staff will work with community resources to develop and support sustainable plans according to the individual's particular situation and level of readiness.

The Importance of Peer Supports

Individuals who have lived the experience of mental illness are often able to communicate in ways that professional providers cannot, and thereby open the door to recovery. A key element of this process, according to individual readiness, is to provide SRR residents with multiple opportunities to connect with peers in and outside of the program. The SRR clinical program will explore, expand and implement ways to best use peer services toward this end.